

San Francisco Public Library – Richmond Branch

Assessment of Compliance with the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Historic Rehabilitation

San Francisco, California

Client:

San Francisco Public Library
315 9th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94118



Current 9th Avenue Entrance

Background: The Richmond Branch library was constructed in 1914 at a cost of \$48,910. The first San Francisco library to be built with funds from Andrew Carnegie, the historic structure was designed in an Italianate style by Bliss and Faville—designers of the Geary Theater and the St. Francis Hotel.

The library’s original construction provided 9,080 square feet of usable space. Due to the need to accommodate books and services for an ever increasing patronage, and the need to renovate the building to meet current codes and regulations, the San Francisco Public Library Administration called for an expansion of the library by approximately 5,000 square feet. This was to be accomplished through the renovation of and addition to the Carnegie library.

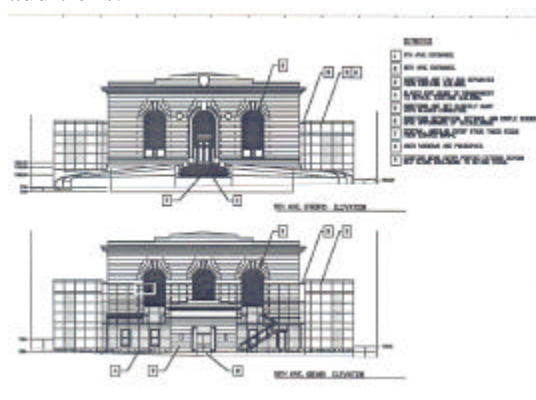
Plans to alter, renovate or destroy a building that has been deemed historically significant must be presented to the San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Board. After reviewing the plans for the Richmond Branch Library, the Landmarks Board questioned whether the renovation would respect the historic fabric of the original design

and structure. The Landmarks Board also wanted to ensure that the renovation would be handled according to the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Historic Rehabilitation. The Library Administration was tasked with hiring an outside consultant to review the plans, to assess compliance with the Secretary of Interior’s standards, and to report their findings directly to the Landmarks Board. Recognized by the National Park Service for its work in the field of historic preservation, **TBA West** was asked to provide the assessment.

Findings: TBA West studied the original and proposed designs, and reviewed (1) areas of the structure that would be impacted by the rehabilitation process (2) proposed construction materials (3) how the addition would connect to the original structure (4) how the renovation and addition would be accomplished.

TBA West concluded that available information and documentation indicated that design and planning processes were moving forward with consideration for the Secretary’s standards. For example, the design of the addition was such that it complemented the original structure—it was not an attempt to duplicate historic features. And for areas of the original structure that would be impacted by construction, all efforts were being made to salvage historic fixtures and molding. Plans for reproducing historic elements were underway when salvage was impossible or excessively costly.

TBA West’s participation helped to achieve the Landmark Board’s unanimous agreement to move forward with the proposed renovations and additions.



Elevation drawing for the proposed addition